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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA: INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CRIME STRATEGY REPORT  
2009-2010

## 1. Draft International Narcotics Control Strategy Report

South Africa

### I. Summary

1. (SBU) While South Africa has greater law enforcement capacity than most African nations to fight domestic and international drug trafficking, production, and abuse, it is facing myriad daunting law enforcement challenges, including serious problems with violent crime, especially in aggravated residence and small business robbery, carjacking, and sexual offenses. The country is an important transit area for cocaine (from South America) and heroin (from Afghanistan and East Asia) primarily destined for Southern African and European markets. South Africa is a large producer of cannabis. According to South Africa's Central Drug Authority, an estimated nine percent of the population uses cannabis. Some of South Africa's cannabis production also finds its way to Europe (primarily the UK). South Africa may also be the world's largest consumer of Mandrax, a variant of methaqualone, an amphetamine-type stimulant. Mandrax is a preferred drug of abuse in South Africa and is often used in combination with cannabis; it is smuggled, primarily from China, India and other sources. South Africa is a significant transit country for precursor chemicals. According to the Organized Crime Threat Analysis prepared by the South African Police Service (SAPS) Annual Report 2008-2009 most of the organized crime syndicates in South Africa are foreign-led-primarily Nigerian, followed by Pakistani and Indian syndicates. Chinese organized crime is also present. The Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA, 1988), particularly its asset forfeiture section, is a potentially useful tool for law enforcement. South Africa is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

### II. Status of Country

2. (SBU) As the most prosperous and one of the most democratic countries on the continent, South Africa still attracts migrants from elsewhere in Africa, especially Zimbabwe, despite a rash of xenophobic attacks in 2008 in which 62 people were killed. The country's 1800 mile coastline and 3,100 mile porous land border, coupled with South Africa's relative prosperity have resulted in the increased use of its territory for the transshipment of contraband of all kinds, including narcotics. An overloaded criminal justice system, straining hard just to deal with "street crime," makes South Africa a tempting target for international organized crime groups of all types. South Africa has the most developed transportation, communications and banking systems in Sub-Saharan Africa. The country's modern telecommunications systems (particularly cellular telephones), its direct air links with South America, Asia and Europe, and its permeable land borders provide opportunities for regional and international trafficking in all forms. Sanctions busting practices, prevalent in the apartheid era, have continued under a different guise: instead of smuggling embargoed items, drugs and other illicit items are now smuggled into and out of South Africa. South Africa is both an importer and an exporter of drugs (marijuana produced on its own territory) and precursor chemicals.

3. (SBU) Despite the progress it has made coping with organized

crime, South Africa is the origin, transit point or terminus of many major drug smuggling routes. Many Nigerians live in South Africa, many of them illegally, and dominate the drug trade in the country. Cannabis is cultivated in South Africa, as well as imported from neighboring countries (Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe), and exported to neighboring countries (e.g., Namibia) and Europe and exported to neighboring countries (e.g., Namibia) and Europe (mainly Holland, UK) as well as consumed in South Africa itself. Methamphetamine (locally known as "tik") is manufactured in South Africa for local consumption, and there has been an explosion in usage, especially in Cape Town and, more recently, in Pretoria. Both heroin and cocaine are imported into South Africa (from Asia and Latin America, respectively), and also exported to Europe, Australia and even the U.S. and Canada. Cocaine from South America generally transits through Brazil, particularly Sao Paulo, and further moves through Angola and Namibia en route to South Africa. Regular 1-2 kilogram quantity seizures of cocaine at O.R Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg also indicate that a large volume of cocaine moves directly from Brazil to South Africa. To curb this trafficking, especially as the 2010 World Cup approaches, South Africa needs increased international cooperation and assistance in the effective use of international controlled deliveries and training.

14. (SBU) South Africa ranks among the world's largest producers of cannabis. South Africa's most widely used drug is marijuana, followed by methaqualone (Mandrax), often used in combination with marijuana (locally called "white pipe"). Most cannabis exports go to Europe and the UK. In terms of use of narcotics, heroin is a particularly dangerous new trend among South Africans, who traditionally only used "dagga" (the local name for marijuana). The Medical Research Council reported in 2008 that heroin abuse is increasing in the provinces of Gauteng, Mpumalanga and the Western

Cape. According to press reports, heroin is widely abused in Pretoria. South Africa is becoming a larger producer of synthetic drugs, mainly Mandrax and methamphetamine, with precursor chemicals smuggled in and labs established domestically.

15. (SBU) As in previous years, a number of clandestine narcotics laboratories were dismantled. In 2008, in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal, SAPS (South Africa Police Service) introduced an initiative to root out clandestine laboratories through training and partnership with the local chemical industry. The "South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use" (SACENDU) reported that although alcohol remains the dominant substance of abuse in South Africa, cannabis and Mandrax alone or in combination continue to be significant drugs of abuse. "Club drugs" and methamphetamine abuse are emerging as a major concern, especially in Cape Town and Pretoria where the increase in treatment demand for methamphetamine addiction treatment is dramatic.

16. (SBU) Methamphetamine has emerged as the main substance of abuse among the young in Cape Town and in Pretoria. In Cape Town, two-thirds of drug abusers are reported to be using tik as a primary or secondary substance of abuse. The increase in treatment admissions for methamphetamine-related problems in Cape Town represented the fastest increase in admissions for a particular drug ever noted in the country, and of particular concern is the large number of adolescent users. This increased use of methamphetamine is "strongly linked to gang culture on the Cape Flats." According to the Medical Research Council (MRC), Cape Town has become the methamphetamine capital of South Africa, with 98 percent of patients seen across the provinces coming from this city. The MRC estimates that nowhere else in the world has Tik grown as quickly as in the poorer colored communities of the Western Cape, surpassing mandrax as the drug of choice. Five years ago just 15 cases involving Tik were reported in the Western Cape. Last year this had increased to 2,628 cases with 91 percent of the users being colored males between the ages of 12 and 21. The increase in the use and addiction of Tik is not only a social problem, but is having a larger impact on economic and security issues. According to the South African Police Services (SAPS), 60 percent of all crimes are related to substance abuse, and in the Western Cape that figure is closer to 80 percent largely as a result of Tik. The perpetrators of these crimes are either under the influence of Tik, or trying to secure money for their next fix. The Central Drug Authority estimates that the

socio-economic costs of drug abuse are R20 billion every year. The direct economic impact of Tik can be found in a study released in July, 2008, by the Small Business Project in the Western Cape. The study found that more than half of small businesses in the region had experienced at least one incident of crime in the last year. Small businesses lose up to 20 percent of their turnover to crime. According to the government's crime statistics, in 2008-9 robberies of business premises increased by 47.4 percent from the previous year. The Institute for Security Studies released a report in May 2007 which said that while colored gangs are believed to produce and control Tik, the Chinese mafia is the main supplier of the production ingredients.

### III. Country Actions against Drugs in 2009

17. (SBU) Policy Initiatives. Combating the use of, production of, and trafficking in illicit narcotics remains an important component of the anticrime agenda of the South African Government (SAG). The Qof the anticrime agenda of the South African Government (SAG). The U.S. co-sponsored a drug prevention best practices conference in Cape Town October 19-21 as part of the Central Drug Authority's stepped up drug prevention awareness effort. The SAG tends to target its limited anti-crime resources on serious, violent and domestic crime, but is making greater efforts to curb the substance abuse it acknowledges is at the root of much violent crime. South Africa still has one of the world's highest rates of murder and rape. According to the South African Police Service Annual Report for 2008/9, the murder rate fell 3.4 percent and sexual offenses increased 12 percent (note: sexual offenses is a new category of crime statistics replacing the categories of rape and indecent assault, so the comparison with previous statistics is not fully valid. End note); however, aggravated robbery increased .8 percent, and robberies at residential premises increased by 27.3 percent. The porous borders are crossed daily by criminals trafficking in all sorts of contraband, including illicit drugs, stolen cars, illegal firearms, diamonds, precious metals, and human beings. Following the April 22 election of President Jacob Zuma, the Ministry of Safety and Security was renamed the Police Ministry, and Zuma insider Bheki Cele was appointed national Police Commissioner, ending a long interim period wherein the SAPS were run by an acting commissioner as former commissioner Selebi awaited trial on corruption charges. The Cabinet-level interagency "Justice Cluster" works to help coordinate the law enforcement and criminal justice system's responses to various challenges. Reconsideration is underway of decisions taken in 2003 to disband and integrate specialized police burueas, such as the Narcotics Bureau and the Child Protections Units. The loss of specialized drug enforcement experience has impeded counternarcotics progress. Another blow was the 2008 elimination of the Directorate of Special Operations of the

National Prosecuting Authority (popularly know as "The Scorpions"), an elite unit created to investigate fraud that later expanded into drug investigation. The successor to the Scorpions, known as the "Hawks," is still largely untested but has claimed credit for several important drug busts. The Central Drug Authority maintains and updates as necessary the "national drug master plan." Other SAG agencies involved in counter narcotics efforts include-in varying degrees-the Home Affairs Department, the Customs Service, and the Border Police (a part of SAPS). The Border Police have 55 land border posts, 10 air-border posts and 9 sea-border posts. Intelligence organizations and the port and airport authorities also have a role in identifying and suppressing drug trafficking. The SAPS 2008/2009 Annual Report noted that an analysis of threats from organized crime groups over the past decade identified drug crimes as accounting for the largest proportion of the known threats. The report said that drug smuggling as an organized crime activity usually ties in with other aspects of organized crime, such as diamond smuggling, gold smuggling, abalone pirating and vehicle hijacking. SAPS concluded that drugs such as Mandrax, cocaine, heroin, Ecstasy and Tik pose major threats to South Africa since they lead to violent crime such as murder, attempted murder, rape and assaults.

18. (SBU) Law Enforcement Efforts. Drug-related crimes, according to the annual SAPS 2008/9 Report increased by a statistically insignificant 4 percent from the 2007/2008 report. There were 109,134 drug-related crimes in 2008. Additional enforcement successes were reported in the press. On January 29, 2009, 230

kilograms of cocaine were seized in Durban. On September 14, 2009, six metric tons of hashish and 116 kilograms of cocaine were seized in Durban. SAPS' Airport Interdiction Unit makes weekly seizures of cocaine from South America and heroin from Pakistan at the Johannesburg and Cape Town Airports.

19. (SBU) Corruption. Accusations of police corruption are

frequent. Credible evidence of narcotics-related corruption among South African law enforcement officials has not, however, been brought to light. Some suspect that the reported quantities of seized drugs are lower than actual seizures, and that the difference finds its way back out on the street. Some amount of corruption among border control officials does appear to contribute to the permeability of South Africa's borders. As a matter of policy, however, the South African government does not encourage or facilitate the illicit production or distribution of narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. Likewise, no senior official of the federal government is known to engage in, encourage or facilitate such illicit production, or to launder proceeds of illegal drug transactions.

10. (SBU) Agreements and Treaties. South Africa is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1961 UN Single Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol. South Africa is a party to the UN Convention against Corruption, and is also a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols against trafficking in persons, migrant smuggling and illegal manufacturing and trafficking in firearms. The U.S. and South Africa have bilateral extradition and mutual legal assistance agreements in force. All extradition matters in recent years, however, have been put on hold because of appeals raised by fugitives challenging the validity of the U.S.-South African extradition treaty. On January 21, 2009, the South African Constitutional Court ruled that the treaty was valid. Government officials have indicated that they intend to move quickly on the pending extradition cases. Both countries have also signed a Letter of Agreement on Anticrime and Counter-narcotics Assistance which provides for U.S. training and commodity assistance to several South African law enforcement agencies. In 2000, the U.S. and South Africa signed a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement.

11. (SBU) Cultivation/Production. Cannabis or "dagga" grows wild in Southern Africa and is a traditional crop in many rural areas of South Africa, particularly the Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal provinces. It also grows wild and is cultivated in neighboring Swaziland and Lesotho. It is possible to have three cannabis crops a year on the same piece of land in South Africa. Most South African cannabis is consumed domestically or in the region. Increasing amounts are, however, being seized in continental Europe and the UK. Some top-end estimates are that 20,000 to 30,000 hectares of arable land are used to grow cannabis, although most observers estimate the area dedicated to illicit cannabis to be about 1,500-2,000 hectares. Although the police force, with some success, sprays cannabis in South Africa, Swaziland, and Lesotho, illicit street prices never seem to rise-an indication of uninterrupted supply. Mandrax, amphetamine, and methamphetamine are also produced in South Africa for domestic consumption. Among South Africans, "dagga" and Mandrax are the traditional drugs of choice; in more recent years, there has been rising interest in domestically produced amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) and imported heroin. Drug flow/Transit. Significant amounts of cocaine reach South Africa from South America. Cocaine is readily available on the

local illicit market. Cocaine is mainly brought in by Nigerian syndicates, or people who work for them. South Africa, once a country of transshipment, has become a country with its own market. The consumption of cocaine, both powder and crystalline ("crack"), is on the increase. Heroin is smuggled into South Africa from Southeast and Southwest Asia, with some moving on to the U.S. and Europe. Most heroin trafficked into South Africa is intended for domestic consumption. Consumption of heroin among South African youth has increased with the advent of smokable heroin. An additional risk in terms of intravenous drug abuse is HIV/AIDS, a major health issue in South Africa. South Africans also import "dagga" from Swaziland and Lesotho, considering it to be of higher



quality than the domestic version. Abuse of methaqualone (Mandrax) and other ATS tablets is on the rise too, especially among urban youth. Even Ecstasy finds its way into townships. Diverted precursor chemicals, some produced locally and some imported into South Africa, are also a growing problem. Many drug liaison officers, as well as South African Police Service officers, believe that South Africa is becoming a place for traffickers to warehouse their stocks of various drugs before sending them on to other countries. They believe that criminals view South Africa as a "weak enforcement" option for such warehousing operations. Nigerian, Pakistani, Indian, Colombian, Venezuelan, and Chinese syndicates are all taking advantage of the fact that South Africa, in addition to "weak enforcement," has excellent financial, transportation, and communications facilities. Traffickers of Nigerian origin may be the most established of organized crime groups operating in South Africa. Using South Africa as their base for world-wide operations, they are involved in virtually every aspect of drug trafficking.

¶12. (SBU) South Africa remained among the world's major importers of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine in 2009, listing its annual legitimate requirement for both chemicals at 20,000 kg. each; however, South Africa's imports of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine have declined each year for the past three years. The South African Police Service's Chemical Control Program is by far the most progressive in Africa, but the potential for diversion of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine remains an area of concern. South Africa participates in the UN-sponsored program Project Prism and is a member of the Project Prism Task Force, serving as the focal point for Africa. South Africa is actively involved in the law enforcement initiatives being developed pursuant to Project Prism to halt the diversion of precursors to illicit chemical trafficking and drug manufacturing organizations around the world.

¶13. (SBU) Drug trafficking via South African airports and the crew of the national carrier South African Airways (SAA) remains a concern. The Airport Company of South Africa (ACSA), which runs all of the international airports in the country, recently revised contracting requirements for baggage handlers to deal with theft and smuggling issues. Equity Aviators, which used temporary staff and subcontractors for its security screening processes has lost its ACSA permit. Baggage handling companies are now required to hire permanent staff in to order to receive an ACSA permit.

¶14. (SBU) Two SAA crews were detained in the UK for drug smuggling in January and February 2009. SAA announced the creation of a task team in February 2009 to probe a second drug bust of crew members in London on suspicions of carrying five kilograms of cocaine. The QLondon on suspicions of carrying five kilograms of cocaine. The measures introduced by SAA following the January incident included changing security systems, adding physical searches of bags, and suing sniffer dogs airside. These and other measures will now be extended across all SAA flights. Poorly paid screening staff remains a concern.

¶15. (SBU) Domestic Programs/Demand Reduction. South Africa has had a long history of Mandrax and "dagga" (cannabis) abuse; drug counselors have noted large increases in the number of patients seeking treatment for crack and heroin addiction. There are many people seeking treatment who are unable to register with any program, and those who manage to enter a rehabilitation program find that available services are constrained by lack of resources. Education of the general public about the dangers of drug addiction remains a high priority for the government. SAPS are continuing their visible crime deterrence policy by organizing visits and counternarcotics lectures in schools with assistance from the Department of Education and NGOs. The objective is to curb the influence of illegal drugs among children. The National Awareness Program, sponsored by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Department of Police and the Central Drug Authority, and originally launched in Cape Town in 2003, continues to present facts on drugs and their dangers to young people, students and others.

¶16. (SBU) Certain successes have been achieved within the correctional system as well, mainly through the efforts of NGOs. In South African prisons, up to 70 percent of inmates are drug users (with an even higher percentage among incarcerated defendants awaiting trial), according to NGO contacts. Among the main

rehabilitation program organizers is the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA), KHULISA, the

Center for Socio-Legal Studies and Creative Education with Youth at Risk, the President's Award for Youth Empowerment, and the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO). "Peer" counselors, trained by KHULISA within the prison system, continue to organize counternarcotics lectures and seminars for inmates. Some of the government-employed prison officials have also received basic training in this area.

#### IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

¶17. (SBU) Policy Initiatives. U.S. law enforcement officers from the DEA, FBI, DHS/ICE (Immigration & Customs Enforcement), the Secret Service, and the State Department's Security Office and Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) successfully cooperate with their South African counterparts. The U.S. also continues to urge the SAG to strengthen its legislation and its law enforcement system to be able to prosecute more sophisticated organized criminal activities, including drug trafficking. Some U.S. training has been provided to the national police, the metropolitan police forces of Johannesburg and Tshwane (Pretoria), the Special Investigating Unit (since disbanded), the Department of Home Affairs, the Customs and Revenue Service, and others. The U.S. through State INL sponsored a drug prevention best practices conference in Cape Town September 19-21, 2009.

¶18. (SBU) The Road Ahead. Bilateral links between the United States and South African law enforcement communities are in the interest of both countries and even closer cooperation in the future is in both sides' interest.

GIPS